S
628.114
W4wd
V.17

Montana State Library
3 0864 1006 7310 5

WELL DEVELOPMENTS

No. 17 - Board of Water Well Contractors - August FY96

MONTANA STATE LIBRARY
1515 E. 6TH AVE.
HELENA, MONTANA 59620

RON GUSE RETIRES

Ron Guse retired from the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) in July after nearly thirty years of public service. Twenty years of that time was spent as DNRC'S representative on the Board of Water Well Contractors (BWWC), where he served as both chairman and vice chairman of the board. Ron's unique understanding of the rules, grasp of reasons for legislation, and thorough analysis of board operations have been invaluable throughout his service. His experience and good humor will be missed.

RULE CHANGES

The Board of Water Well Contractors (BWWC) has submitted a notice to the Secretary of State's Office to implement several rule changes. A public hearing has been scheduled for September 27, 1996, at the Public Health and Human Services (formerly SRS) Auditorium at 111 Sanders, Helena. The notice of rule changes will be sent to all licensed contractors, drillers, and monitoring well constructors, as well as involved agencies. Comments on the proposed changes can be sent to:

Bob Rudio
Program Manager
Board of Water Well Contractors
PO Box 201601
Helena MT 59620-1601

The Rules Committee of the BWWC has made several recommendations to the board. Briefly, the following are being considered.

1. Charging a fee to review exemption permits for landowners to drill their own wells
2. Specifying the location of the well and the distances from drain fields, septic systems, or sewer systems
3. Specifying vented relief for the casing of water wells located within 100-year floodplains
4. Clarifying general sealing rules and using as examples the unconsolidated and consolidated formation techniques for sealing
5. Clarifying the time frames for controlling flowing wells
6. Clarifying the responsibility for well abandonment by driller or well owner

The board does not intend to change monitoring well rules at this time.

HISTORICAL BOARD MEETINGS

The eighth meeting of the Water Well Contractors Examining Board was held in Helena on April 17, 1962. Chairman Fred Buck, C. W. Brinck, and Bert VanDyken were present. A motion was made to grant licenses to the following:

C. T. Reid	Sheridan, Wyo.
Harold Goodale	Beach, N.Dak.
Francis Boyce	Trotters, N.Dak.
Wm. S. Love	Billings, Mont.
Malcolm Moran	Stanford, Mont.
H. Andrew	Idaho Falls, Idaho

The motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

Board Members

Wes Lindsay, Chairman/Industry Member
Ron Guse, Vice Chairman/DNRC Member
John Arrigo, DEQ Member
Bob Bergantino, MBMG Member
Pat Byrne, Industry Member
Bob Rudio, Program Manager

RETURN

OFFICE RELOCATION

The BWWC has moved, along with the Water Resources Division of the DNRC. The new address is:

48 North Last Chance Gulch
PO Box 201601
Helena MT 59620-1601

The location is near the Parrot Confectionery on the downtown walking mall. The phone number — 1 (406) 444-6643 — has not changed.

The Montana Chamber of Commerce tells us that Ravalli County is the fastest growing county per capita in Montana.

WELL SCREENS FOR GLACIAL CLAYS

Well screens have been routinely used in the industry since the early 1960s and are manufactured by several reputable firms. One product that came to our attention is a pre-packed screen made and distributed by Johnson Well Products. This gravel-packed screen is capable of filtering micron-sized silts that cause dirty water problems in wells from the glacial gravels of major aquifers in western and northern Montana. The screen allows 3 gallons per minute of flow per foot of screen and is easily connected to a PVC liner. The company has received BWWC approval for continuing education credit for attending demonstrations of this product.

BWWC VS. DNRC

There is a difference between the Board of Water Well Contractors (BWWC) and the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC).

The BWWC is attached to the DNRC for administrative purposes only. The BWWC is a quasi-judicial board, meaning that it can issue and suspend or revoke licenses as well as promulgate rules and regulations. It can investigate complaints and hold administrative disciplinary hearings.

In 1985, the BWWC was transferred by law from the Department of Commerce to the DNRC to allow the BWWC to use the hydrogeological services of the DNRC in its investigations. Further, the legislature felt that the BWWC would benefit by using the DNRC's regional offices for investigation of complaints. This procedure saves the BWWC costs in staff and services and ultimately keeps license fees lower.

Water well contractors are required by law to submit well logs to the DNRC regional offices because that is where the water rights are issued. The BWWC gets only logs that are improperly filled out (for correction) and monitoring well logs.

NEW LICENSES

The BWWC welcomes these new licensees.

Water Well Contractors/Monitoring Well Constructors

Tony Quinell	-	Kalispell
Allyn Buff	-	Libby
Britt Lindsay	-	Clancy
Brad Forman	-	Polson
Brad Jones	-	Stevensville
Bryan Nydoske	-	Woodland, Calif.
G. Reid Humes	-	Big Fork
Mike Wolf	-	Sheridan, Wyo.
Cris Cronin	-	Helena
Britt Stevens	-	Bozeman
John Schwarz	-	Kalispell
Jeani Adams	-	Missoula
Charles Peterson	-	Billings
Paul Bray	-	Billings

Water Well Drillers

Troy Hauser	-	Manhattan
David Schwarzrock	-	Choteau
Brian Naugle	-	Missoula
Ron Linnemon	-	Thompson Falls
Dan Duran	-	Butte
Richard Jones	-	Stevensville
Bill Green	-	Missoula

There are currently 182 water well contractors, 103 monitoring well constructors (separate licenses), and 46 water well drillers.

RENEWALS

Over thirty renewal notices were returned to the board office due to wrong addresses. The BWWC needs to be notified of address changes for special notices, rules changes, and license renewals. The board needs the following each year:

1. Completed renewal form including current address and phone number
2. Renewal fee ($140 plus late charge, if any)
3. Bond continuation certificate for the next year
4. Proof of four hours of board-approved continuing education for that year

The renewal forms are sent out in May annually. It is best to have the bond and continuing education certificates handy to include with the renewal form and fee when they are returned prior to July 1 each year.

QUALIFICATION FOR LICENSURE

There is much similarity in the requirements for licensure. The three licenses — contractor, driller, and constructor — basically require:

1. Apprenticeship for one year under a person licensed in Montana, or

2. Reciprocity from another state, or

3. Equivalent experience, education, or both.

Applicants for the contractor's and driller's licenses generally find that the BWWC views their equivalent experience with skepticism and rarely grants qualification for equivalent experience. The BWWC would rather err on the side of "Not Qualified" than have a licensed water well contractor or driller unable or unwilling to comply with the rules.

The BWWC takes a more liberal view of a monitoring well constructor's equivalent experience. Substantial experience, education, and references are still required, however.

The BWWC also looks favorably on a driller's application when the applicant is currently employed as well as recommended by a licensed contractor. Rarely does the board waive the one-year apprenticeship requirement, however.

FIRES

The board has received two complaints of grass fires that were started by sparks from welding near drill rigs. Licensees should keep in mind that July, August, and September can be very dry, and it is easy to start a fire that you cannot control. Basic fire extinguishers and fire-safety-related equipment should be checked often during the fall season.

WATER WELL LOGS

Failure to fill out the DNRC water well log completely remains a troublesome problem for the BWWC. Contractors are required by law to provide the log to both the well owner and the DNRC regional office within 60 days of well completion. The log is necessary for the well owner to get a water right and the DNRC to record the well and monitor state aquifers. Lack of accurate well location, missing pump test data, and poor descriptions of equipment and materials are the major shortcomings of the logs that are returned to the contractors for corrections.

VARIANCES

The BWWC granted three variances from the construction standards in 1996. One request was for rehabilitating an old well where new casing was set around old casing and sealing could be done to only about 12 feet rather than the required 18-foot depth. Two requests were granted along the Yellowstone River valley where shallow aquifers (12 feet to 18 feet below the surface) prevented meeting the sealing standard. The BWWC reasoned that it was better to have a licensed contractor construct the shallow wells and seal the surface casing than to deny the request only to find that the landowner can use a backhoe to dig a well and potentially expose the aquifer to surface contamination.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Four hours of continuing education (C.E.) credit are required for license renewal. C.E. credit for attendance at BWWC-sanctioned professional seminars is available. All licensees will receive four hours of continuing education credit for attending any of the following events:

- METC meeting - Small Water and Wastewater Session - September 4-5, 1996 - Havre - Call 1(406) 454-2728.
- Wells "Source Protection" - September 17, 1996, in Twin Bridges - September 19, 1996, in Winnett - Call 1 (406) 454-1151.
- Water and Wastewater - multiple topics training - October 29-30, 1996, in Glasgow - December 4-5, 1996, in Kalispell - Call 1(406) 454-2728.
- NGWA - Annual Convention - December 8-11, 1996 - Las Vegas, Nevada - Call 1-800-551-7379.
- Plans should be made for the MWWDA convention in Helena at the Colonial Inn the first week in February, 1997.

Schedules have not yet been received for local mud and pump schools.

RECIPROCITY

A person licensed in another state may be allowed to forego the qualification process in applying for a Montana license. BWWC policy, however, is that the examination still must be completed.

How many water wells were drilled in Montana in 1995, and how does that compare to the number in previous years?

Year		Wells Drilled
1995	-	4,456
1994	-	5,071
1993	-	5,092
1992	-	4,925

Compiled by Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology, August 1996

For further information on any of the material contained herein, contact:

Bob Rudio, Program Manager
Board of Water Well Contractors
48 North Last Chance Gulch
PO Box 201601
Helena MT 59620-1601
(406) 444-6643

Persons with disabilities who need an alternative, accessible format of this document should contact DNRC at the address below. Phone (406) 444-6643.

BOARD OF WATER WELL CONTRACTORS
48 North Last Chance Gulch
PO Box 201601
Helena MT 59620-1601

375 copies of this document were published at an estimated cost of $.16 per copy. The total cost of $172 includes $60 for printing and $112 for distribution.